A Hypothesis for the Mechanism of Bodily Resurrection

A model compatible with Biblical teaching, as well as biology and neuroscience

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Abstract: This study proposes a model for the Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection, positing that personal identity is encoded in two primary biological information systems: the DNA, which serves as the blueprint for physical form, and the connectome, the unique pattern of neural connections that is a repository for memory, character, and consciousness. Drawing upon insights from theologians such as John Polkinghorne, N.T. Wright, and Nancey Murphy, and correlating them with contemporary findings in genetics and neuroscience, we hypothesize that the resurrection involves a divine act of re-embodiment. This act consists of recreating a perfected, "glorified" physical body based on the DNA blueprint and re-instantiating the individual's unique connectome (the

[*] The author utilized a tool of artificial intelligence (specifically Gemini Pro 2.5) for help in the research and writing of this study.

individual's complete system of neural connections). This model provides a scientifically plausible and theologically coherent framework that affirms the Biblical emphasis on mind/body unity, grounds personal identity in a verifiable physical reality, and imbues the earthly process of sanctification with eternal significance as the active, Spirit-led shaping of the very pattern that will be preserved after the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is presented as the archetype and guarantee of this eschatological hope.

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Introduction: A Coherent Hope for a Scientific Age

The Christian faith hinges upon a singular, audacious claim: the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and the promised future bodily resurrection of the believers of Jesus Christ.[1] As the Apostle Paul unequivocally states, "For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:16-17). This doctrine is not an accessory to the gospel but its very engine, the foundation of Christian hope.[3] Yet, for many in a modern, scientific age, this central tenet is perhaps the most significant stumbling block. Conditioned by a worldview that equates reality with the empirically verifiable and repeatable, the notion of a body returning from death can seem fantastical, a relic of a pre-scientific imagination.[4] The prevailing scientific consensus, which compellingly links consciousness, memory, and personal identity to the intricate electrochemical processes of the physical brain, appears to render death an absolute and final terminus of the self.[7] When the brain ceases to function, the person, it is assumed, ceases to exist.

This study confronts this perceived impasse, not by rejecting scientific findings nor retreating into a faith divorced from reason, but by proposing a framework that demonstrates a profound and unexpected compatibility between the Biblical promise of resurrection and our unfolding understanding of biology and neuroscience. The central challenge is to articulate a model of resurrection that is both theologically orthodox and scientifically plausible, offering a "coherent hope" for an age that rightly demands intellectual rigor. Many believers, confronted

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with the apparent finality of biological death, may see the Biblical passages speaking of a bodily resurrection as metaphorical or allegorical, a hopeful but ultimately fanciful notion. The desire motivating this research is to provide a robust mechanism that can give believers confidence in the literal, Biblical promise of a future embodied existence, mitigating the impulse to dismiss these foundational scriptures.

To this end, we introduce the DNA-Connectome model of bodily resurrection. This hypothesis posits that the entirety of a person's identity is encoded within two distinct but integrated biological information systems. The first is Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), the genetic blueprint that dictates our physical form, inherited traits, and biological constitution. The second, and more crucial for personal identity, is the connectome: the complete and unique map of all neural connections within an individual's brain. This intricate network, shaped by a lifetime of experience, learning, and choice, serves as the physical repository for our memories, character, personality, and the emergent phenomenon of consciousness itself.

Within this framework, the resurrection is understood as a divine act of re-creation and re-instantiation. It is hypothesized that an omniscient God, who possesses perfect knowledge of these foundational information patterns, performs a new creative act at the time of the final, bodily resurrection of the saints. This act involves, first, the recreation of a perfected, "glorified" physical body using the individual's unique DNA as the template, corrected of all flaws and corruptions. Second, it involves the re-instantiation of the individual's unique connectome — their preserved pattern of self — into the neural architecture of this new body. This act restores the whole person in their mind/body unity, ensuring the continuity of personal identity, memory, and

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consciousness from their earthly life into the eternal one.

This study will unfold this hypothesis in a cumulative argument. Section 1 will establish the necessary anthropological foundation, arguing from both Biblical and theological sources that the human person is a holistic, mind/body unity, not a dualistic composite of a mortal body and a soul independent from the body. Section 2 will explore the role of DNA as the informational blueprint for the physical form, framing it within a theology of divine omniscience. Section 3 will present the the connectome as, effectively, the storage container for the essence of our individual "inner" identity: our memories, personality, consciousness, soul, spirit, etc. Section 4 will synthesize these elements into a detailed model of resurrection and glorification, explaining a proposed mechanism for these actions by God. Section 5 will explore the profound implication of this model for Christian ethics, arguing that the process of sanctification is the earthly, Spirit-led reformation of the very neural pattern that will be eternally preserved. Finally, Section 6 will anchor this entire model in the historical reality of Jesus Christ's resurrection, presenting his glorified body as the archetype and guarantee of the believer's hope.

This model is not presented as a definitive scientific proof or a new theological dogma, but as a plausible and powerful framework for understanding that the ancient Christian hope for bodily resurrection is not only compatible with modern science but is, in fact, enriched and illuminated by it.

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Section 1: A Person as a Mind/Body Unity

To construct a coherent model of bodily resurrection, one must first establish a coherent model of the human person. The popular conception, both within and outside the church, often defaults to a form of dualism: the idea that a person is an immaterial soul or mind temporarily inhabiting a disposable physical body. However, a rigorous examination of both the Biblical witness and contemporary theological-philosophical thought reveals this view to be a profound distortion. The authentic Christian understanding, which finds surprising support in modern neuroscience, is of the human person as an integrated, holistic entity — a mind/body unity, without the existence of an immaterial soul. We do propose that the soul does exist, but it exists within the processes of this mind/body unity, and it cannot exist independently from the body.

Deconstructing Platonic Dualism

The starkest way to grasp the Biblical view of resurrection is to contrast it with the Hellenistic philosophical view of the soul's independence from the physical body. Theologian Oscar Cullmann provides a powerful analysis by comparing the deaths of Socrates and Jesus.[9] For Socrates, as recounted in Plato's *Phaedo*, death is welcomed as "the soul's great friend".[9] The body is a prison, a source of corruption and limitation, and death is the liberating event that allows the pure, immaterial soul to escape its fleshly confinement and return to the realm of eternal Forms.[11] In this schema, the body is something to be overcome, and its destruction is a cause for rejoicing.

The Biblical account of Jesus's death presents the absolute antithesis of this. For Jesus, death is not a friend but "the last

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enemy" to be conquered (1 Corinthians 15:26).[9] It is the "wages of sin" (Romans 6:23), an unnatural intrusion into God's good creation.[11] The Christian hope, therefore, is not a negative assertion of immortality — the simple continuation of a soul that does not die. Rather, it is a radical, positive assertion of *resurrection*: the belief that the whole person, who has truly and completely died, is recalled to life by a new, powerful act of creation by God.[9] This fundamental distinction reveals that the core Christian hope is not the escape from the body but the redemption *of* the body; not the immortality of a disembodied soul, but the reversal of death for the whole, integrated person.[12]

Theologian N. T. Wright has forcefully argued that much of Western Christianity has been unconsciously Platonized, replacing the Biblical hope of resurrection with a vague notion of the immaterial soul being wafted to heaven.[12] This disembodied destiny, he contends, is a departure from the faith of the early church. The ultimate Christian hope is not an escape from material existence but the restoration and glorification of our bodies within a renewed heaven and a renewed earth.[13] The Greco-Roman world into which Christianity was born was largely hostile to the idea of resurrection, viewing the body as something to be shed, like a snake's skin. The Homeric "soul" was a mere evanescent breath, while the true self remained lifeless on the ground; for Platonists, the soul's release was a joyous event.[12] This worldview is fundamentally incompatible with the Hebraic understanding that undergirds the New Testament.

Affirming a Biblical Holism

The Old Testament consistently presents a holistic view of human nature. The Hebrew conception of personality is that of an

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"animated body, not an incarnate soul".[9] Terms like *nephesh* (often translated "soul") do not refer to a separate, immaterial component of a person but rather to the whole living being, the person as a unified entity with life, breath, and appetite. Similarly, *ruah* (spirit) refers to the breath or wind of life, the animating principle from God, not an independent, conscious entity that survives death.[7] Death, in this view, is the cessation of the whole person. The dead are depicted as going down (*in toto*) to a mysterious place called Sheol.

This holistic anthropology is carried into the New Testament. The body is not a prison but the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19), a vessel for God's glory that is to be cared for and sanctified.[11] The hope expressed in the Bible is not for the soul to be freed *from* the body, but for the whole person — body and soul together — to be set free from the power of sin and death.[11] This mind/body unity is affirmed by contemporary theologians who engage with science. John Polkinghorne, a respected physicist as well as admired theologian, describes human beings as "psychosomatic entities," — entities whose minds and bodies are unified — emphasizing that both the mind and the body are indispensable components of our true selves.[14] We are, and are destined to remain, embodied beings.

Philosophical Frameworks: Nonreductive Physicalism, and Dual-Aspect Monism

The challenge for modern theology is to articulate this Biblical holism in a way that is philosophically robust and consistent with scientific knowledge. Two prominent frameworks have emerged that achieve this: nonreductive physicalism and dual-aspect monism.

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Non-Reductive Physicalism, championed by thinkers like Nancey Murphy, provides a powerful alternative to both traditional substance dualism and eliminative materialism.[7] This view posits that human beings are purely physical entities. However, it is "nonreductive" in that it denies that higher-level human capacities — such as consciousness, morality, free will, and religious experience — can be reduced to "nothing but" the firings of neurons.[15] Instead, these are understood as emergent properties that arise from the immense complexity of the brain's organization and its interaction with the body and the environment.[7] Neuroscience, with its localization studies linking specific cognitive and emotional functions to particular brain regions, provides compelling evidence that it is the brain, not an immaterial soul, that performs these functions.[7] Nonreductive physicalism embraces this data while insisting that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; the emergent mind has causal efficacy and cannot be fully explained by the laws governing its constituent physical components.

Dual-Aspect Monism, articulated by John Polkinghorne, offers a complementary perspective. It proposes that there is "only one stuff in the world," not two (matter and mind), but this one stuff can manifest in two contrasting states or aspects: the material and the mental.[17] From this viewpoint, mind and brain are not two different things but two different ways of understanding the same integrated reality. Polkinghorne defines the "soul" not as a separate substance but as "the information-bearing pattern carried by the matter of the body".[17] This is a modern revival of the Aristotelian-Thomistic idea of the soul as the "form of the body," but updated with the language of information theory.[17] This "immensely complex, information-

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bearing pattern" includes the structure of our neurons and the entire history of their development that produces our unique personality.[14]

In addition to these monist (non-dualist) perspectives of human anthropology, many other modern Christian anthropologists, in light of advances in neuroscience, have proposed their own monist anthropologies, such as Kevin Corcoran with his "Constitution View"[58], and Joel Green's "monist interpretation of the human person."[59] Though there are subtle differences between all of these proposed anthropologies, they all agree on a central point: the human person is a unified, embodied being, whose mental and spiritual life is inextricably linked to their physical body. This stands in stark contrast to substance dualism, the view that the mind or soul is a distinct, immaterial substance that can exist independently of the body. Given the number of prominent Christian scholars who have recently proposed monist anthropologies, one could assert that the trend is that there is a convergence of Christian and secular anthropologies toward a framework that affirms a mind/body unity, in consonance with modern neuroscientific findings. Moreover, these Christian scholars have given evidence that these monist anthropologies are consistent with Biblical teaching.

Adopting an anthropological framework that affirms a mind/body unity has profound consequences. If a person is an integrated physical whole, then death — the cessation of bodily function — is the cessation of the person's existence.[19] In other words, it is true *death.* There is no promise or hope expressed in the Bible of a conscious, *disembodied* soul, a soul that exists independently of the body. The promise and hope expressed in the Bible is that of a *bodily* resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15).

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An anthropology of a mind/body unity makes the doctrine of a future bodily resurrection, not merely an optional extra or a welcome reunion for a surviving soul, but the absolute and sole ground of any hope for life beyond the grave, as taught by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.

This leads to a powerful realization about the relationship between modern science and Christian theology. Far from being an antagonist that threatens to dismantle Christian doctrine, neuroscience, in its systematic critique of substance dualism, is performing a vital theological service. The scientific data demonstrating the tight coupling of mind and brain [8] inadvertently pushes theology to purify itself of the Hellenistic (Platonic) philosophical assumptions that it absorbed over centuries. It forces a confrontation with the fact that the popular notion of a disembodied soul is more a product of Greek philosophy than Biblical revelation.[10] In this way, scientific progress does not invalidate the Christian hope; it actually clarifies it. It compels a return to the original, more challenging, and more robustly Biblical hope of the early church: not the serene immortality of a ghost, but the radical, world-transforming, bodily resurrection of the dead. This convergence establishes the necessary anthropological foundation upon which a scientifically informed model of resurrection can be built.

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Section 2: The Blueprint of Physical Form: DNA and Divine Information

Having established the human person as a mind/body unity, the first pillar of the proposed resurrection model concerns the physical body itself. If God is to re-create a person's body, there must be a basis for its form and structure that ensures continuity with the earthly body. Modern biology provides a powerful candidate for this basis: the information encoded in Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). By understanding DNA as a divine blueprint, we can construct a scientifically plausible and theologically coherent account of how the physical body can be recreated.

DNA as the Foundational Code

At the most fundamental level of biology, life is an expression of information. The molecule of DNA serves as the primary genetic material for all known cellular organisms, containing the complete set of instructions required to build, maintain, and reproduce that organism.[22] This information is encoded in the sequence of four nucleotide bases — adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C), and thymine (T) — arranged in a stable double-helix structure. This structure is not only remarkably robust but also allows for high-fidelity replication, ensuring that genetic information can be passed down through generations with extraordinary accuracy.[23] In a human, this genetic blueprint consists of approximately three billion base pairs, a vast library of information that dictates everything from eye color and height to predispositions for certain talents.

The fact that all living things on Earth, from the simplest bacterium to the most complex mammal, share this same basic

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genetic material and the same genetic code for translating that information into proteins is powerful evidence that life was designed by an intelligent Creator. It points to a universal language of life, a foundational information-system upon which all biological complexity is built. This shift in scientific understanding, from viewing life as a purely mechanical system to seeing it as an information-processing system, is of profound significance for a theological engagement with biology.

Theological Interpretation: Divine Omniscience and Creation

Framing this scientific reality within a theological context provides a rational basis for the re-creation of the physical body. If DNA is the precise, digitally encoded blueprint for an individual's physical form, then our omniscient God, our Creator, must certainly possess a perfect and complete knowledge of this blueprint for every person who has ever lived. The physical decay of the body and the breakdown of its DNA molecules at death poses no informational challenge to God. The information itself — the specific sequence of the three billion base pairs that defined a particular individual — persists within the divine mind, which is the ultimate repository of all reality. Such minute knowledge by God of His created beings is testified to by Jesus Himself, who taught, "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Luke 12:6-7).

The act of resurrection, from this perspective, is not the impossible task of gathering scattered atoms from across the globe. Rather, it is an act of new creation based on a known and perfectly preserved pattern of the DNA. While the scientific prospect of reconstructing a complex organism from its DNA

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sequence alone is currently a challenge of unimaginable proportions, it is a conceptually straightforward task for an omnipotent and omniscient Being.[24] God, as the author of the laws of biology and the ultimate source of the information they encode, is not bound by the material instantiation of that information. He can take the preserved genetic information and use it as a template to construct a new physical body. This provides a mechanism for the resurrection of the body that is not arbitrary or magical, but orderly and based on the very informational principles that govern life in the current creation. This act ensures a fundamental physical continuity between the earthly body and the resurrected body, even if the constituent atoms are not the same. It is the *form*, the *pattern*, the *information* that matters, and this information is securely held by the Creator.

This perspective reveals a crucial conceptual bridge between the physical world and the realm of divine action. The language of information science becomes a shared vocabulary for both biology and theology. Historically, divine miracles, including the resurrection, have often been viewed as supernatural interruptions or violations of the natural order. This can create a tension for those with a scientific mindset, who see the world as governed by consistent, intelligible laws. However, by understanding biology as an information-based science, a new perspective emerges.

God's creative power can be understood not as a force that breaks the rules of nature, but as the ultimate source of the information that *constitutes* those rules and the systems they govern. The resurrection, in this light, is not a suspension of order but the ultimate expression of a deeper, information-based order that originates in the mind of God. It is not the chaotic reassembly of matter, but the perfect re-instantiation of a known, ordered

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pattern of information — the DNA blueprint. This reframes the resurrection from a brute-force miracle that defies science to an elegant, information-driven act of new creation that is profoundly consistent with the deepest principles of the biological world that God Himself authored. God's resurrection of a person's body is a divine act, using the very language of life — the genetic code — to write the next chapter of that person's existence.

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Section 3: The Connectome as the Repository of Our "Inner" Identity

While DNA provides the blueprint for the physical vessel, it does not account for the entirety of the human person. The essence of our individual identity — our memories, personality, character, and the subjective experience of consciousness — resides not in our genes but in the unique architecture of our brains. This section presents the second pillar of the hypothesis: the connectome, the complete map of neural connections within our brain. These complex neural connections can be seen as the physical repository for our unique "inner" identity. By identifying the connectome as the repository of our memories, personality, inner character, and even soul and spirit, we can establish a robust, scientifically grounded basis for the preservation of personal identity through death and into the resurrection.

The Scientific Basis of the Connectome

The human brain is the most complex object known in the universe, containing approximately 86 billion neurons, each forming thousands of connections, or synapses, with other neurons. The total number of connections is estimated to be in the trillions, within a single human brain. The **connectome** is the comprehensive map of these neural connections.[27] It is the brain's complete wiring diagram. For decades, neuroscience focused on the function of specific brain regions, but the modern paradigm of connectomics recognizes that brain function, arises from the patterns of connectivity between these regions.[28]

Crucially, this intricate wiring is not generic; it is highly personalized. Research from the Human Connectome Project (HCP), a massive undertaking to map the neural pathways of the

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human brain, has produced a landmark discovery: an individual's pattern of functional brain connectivity acts as a unique "fingerprint".[29] Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data, researchers have demonstrated that they can accurately identify an individual from a large group based solely on their neural connectivity profile. This "connectome fingerprinting" is remarkably robust and reliable.[29]

What makes this finding so significant for a theory of personal identity is the stability of this neural signature. The identification of an individual is successful not only across different scan sessions but even between different brain states, such as when the brain is at rest versus when it is engaged in a specific task.[29] This indicates that while moment-to-moment brain activity fluctuates, there is an underlying, intrinsic functional architecture that is a stable and characteristic trait of that individual. The connectome, which can be distinctive in identifying a person, is also predictive of cognitive behavior. Further research has provided compelling evidence that our most personal attributes, including memories and personality traits, are physically encoded in the strength and pattern of these specific synaptic connections.[31] Scientists can now, for example, selectively erase specific memories in mice by targeting the particular synapses where that memory is stored.[31] This body of evidence strongly supports the conclusion that the connectome is the physical repository for our unique identity—our memories, personality, character, and (we would posit) even what the Bible terms as our soul and spirit. It is the physical structure that makes our subjective experience of identity and consciousness possible. In other words, there is a solid scientific basis that, what we may call the "inner functions" of a human being — the consciousness, soul, spirit, etc. — are a result of the unique wiring diagram of

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each person's brain.

Theological-Philosophical Integration: Polkinghorne's "Information-Bearing Pattern"

This scientific understanding of the connectome aligns with remarkable precision with the philosophical-theological model proposed by the renowned theoretical physicist and theologian, John Polkinghorne (1930-2021). Seeking a concept of the soul that is compatible with modern science, Polkinghorne rejects simple substance dualism and defines the soul as "the immensely complex, information-bearing pattern in which that matter [of the body] is organized".[14] This definition provides a perfect conceptual counterpart to the connectome.

The connectome *is* this information-bearing pattern. It is not the *matter* of the brain itself (the neurons and glial cells), but the specific, intricate, and historically contingent *pattern* of their organization. This pattern includes the entire developmental history of the brain, encapsulating a lifetime of learning, experience, relationships, and choices that have shaped the synaptic connections to produce a unique personality and set of behaviors.[14] Polkinghorne's model posits that at the death of the physical body and because of brain decay, this pattern ceases to be physically instantiated. However, the *information* of the pattern is not lost. It is preserved by God, held "in the divine memory," awaiting a future re-embodiment.[14] This provides a robust, non-dualistic definition of the soul that is fully compatible with the findings of modern neuroscience. The "soul" is no longer a spooky, immaterial ghost, but the rich, complex, and unique informational content of a person's life, physically encoded in their neural architecture.

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This framework provides a powerful solution to one of the most persistent philosophical challenges to the doctrine of resurrection: the problem of personal identity. Classical objections, often invoking paradoxes like the Ship of Theseus, question how a resurrected being can be considered the *same person* as the one who died.* If God simply creates a perfect replica, is it not just a clone, a new entity that merely *thinks* it is the original?

The connectome model elegantly sidesteps this dilemma. The basis of personal identity is located not in *the persistence of the material substance* (the atoms of the body and brain), but in the *continuity* of the unique, unrepeatable, and extraordinarily complex *information pattern*. The philosophical debate around personal identity has long centered on psychological continuity — the overlapping chains of memory, beliefs, and personality traits, as proposed by Neo-Lockean theories.[34] Neuroscience now reveals the physical repository of this psychological continuity: it is the connectome.[34] Therefore, when God preserves Polkinghorne's "information-bearing pattern," He is preserving the very basis of personal identity.

The resurrection, then, is not the reanimation of the old atoms or the creation of a mere copy. It is the **re-instantiation** of the unique, identity-defining informational pattern into a new, glorified physical body. To use a computational analogy, personal identity resides in the "software" (the specific state of the

* The "Ship of Theseus" paradox questions whether an object can be identified as being the same object if each of its original component parts have been replaced over time. A related question is often raised about a resurrection which posits that God, to raise someone from the dead, recreates an identical copy of the person's body: Does that person have the same identity, pre- and post-resurrection?

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connectome, encoding a lifetime of information) and not the "hardware" (the biological brain). At the resurrection, God uploads (so to speak) the original, preserved software onto new and improved hardware (the glorified body). Because it is the identical informational pattern, it is, from an "inner"-identity point of view, the same person. This provides a philosophically robust account of the continuity of the self across the chasm of death, grounding personal identity in a scientifically identifiable and informationally defined reality.

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Section 4: The Divine Act of Re-Embodiment: A Model for Resurrection and Glorification

By integrating the concepts of DNA as the blueprint of form and the connectome as the pattern of identity, we can now articulate a synthetic model for the divine act of resurrection. This section will outline the proposed mechanics of this re-embodiment and explore the nature of the "glorified" body, demonstrating how this model provides a science-compatible hypothesis of core theological concepts.

The Hypothesized Model of Resurrection

The proposed model envisions the resurrection as a coherent, information-based process undertaken by an omniscient and omnipotent God. The sequence can be understood as follows:

1. **Death and Information Preservation:** At the point of biological death, the physical body, with its DNA, and the brain, with its connectome, begin to decay. The earthly physical instantiation of the person ceases. However, the complete information that defined that person is not annihilated. God, in His omniscience, preserves two complete sets of data: (a) the individual's unique genetic blueprint (the DNA) and (b) their unique neural connectome, the "information-bearing pattern" of their entire lived experience, character, and consciousness. This act of divine preservation is what Polkinghorne refers to as holding the pattern "in the divine memory".[14]

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2. **Eschatological Re-Creation:** At the time of the final resurrection (the *eschaton*), God performs a new act of creation. This act has two distinct but unified components:
    - **Re-creation of the Body:** Utilizing the preserved DNA information as the blueprint for our unique self, God creates a new physical body. This body is in continuity with the earthly body in that it is based on the same foundational genetic identity.
    - **Re-instantiation of the Inner Self:** God then "imprints" or re-instantiates the preserved connectome onto the new neural structures of this resurrected body. This act transfers the entirety of the individual's memories, personality, and consciousness into the new physical body, thereby restoring the whole person.
    - **Activation of new life:** Finally, God breathes life into the resurrected body, just as He breathed into Adam the "breath of life" (Gen. 2:7).

This act of re-embodiment ensures the continuity of both physical form (rooted in the DNA) and personal identity (rooted in the connectome). The result is the restoration of the complete mind/body unity, the same individual who lived and died on earth, now alive again in a new mode of existence.

Defining the "Glorified" Body

The Bible does not describe the resurrected state as a simple return to our current form of existence. Instead, it speaks of a profound transformation known as **glorification**. Theologically, glorification is the final step in the order of salvation, where God fully and finally removes sin from the believer and conforms

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them perfectly to the image of His risen Son, Jesus Christ, in a perfect and eternal state.[36] It is the culmination of the process of sanctification, resulting in a state of perfected holiness in a renewed body.[36]

The primary Biblical text for understanding this transformation is **1 Corinthians 15**. There, the Apostle Paul draws a sharp contrast between the current "natural body" (*soma psychikon*) and the future "spiritual body" (*soma pneumatikon*).[1] He uses agricultural imagery: the body is "sown" in corruption, dishonor, and weakness, but it is "raised" in incorruption, glory, and power.[2] The term "spiritual body" is crucial and often misunderstood. It does not mean an immaterial, ghostly, or non-physical body, a concept that would be a contradiction in the context of the passage in 1 Corinthians, which speaks clearly of a physical body after resurrection.[40] The Greek term *pneumatikon* does not denote the *substance* of the body, but rather its *animating principle*. A "natural body" is one animated by the soul (*psyche*) and subject to the limitations of this fallen world. A "spiritual body" is a real, physical body *animated* and completely governed by the Spirit of God (*pneuma*), no longer subject to sin, decay, or death.[41]

This concept is reinforced in **Philippians 3:21**, where Paul states that the Lord Jesus Christ "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body".[42] The term "lowly body" (or "body of our humiliation") points to our current physical existence, which is subject to weakness, disease, aging, and death.[42] The promised transformation is a radical upgrade from this state of humiliation to a state of glory, power, and incorruptibility, patterned after the resurrected body of Christ himself.[37]

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The Nature of Glorification in the DNA-Connectome Model

The DNA-Connectome model allows for a remarkably specific and tangible understanding of what this process of glorification could entail. It is not a vague or magical change but a precise, information-based perfection of the human person at both the genetic and neurological levels.

- **Correcting the Blueprint (DNA):** Glorification of the physical form would involve God's perfect editing of the DNA blueprint. Any genetic mutations, inherited predispositions to disease, congenital defects, and all other markers of biological corruption that are a consequence of existing in a fallen world would be corrected. The re-created body would be based on a perfected version of our unique genome, resulting in a physical form free from the vulnerabilities of our "lowly body" (as Paul terms it).
- **Purifying the Pattern (Connectome):** This is the most profound aspect of glorification. If the connectome is the physical repository of our character, desires, memories, and habits, then its purification is the very mechanism of our final sanctification. This divine act would involve the "purification" of the information-bearing pattern that God has preserved.[14] This implies a divine healing and re-writing of the neural connections that correspond to our sinful nature and the wounds of our earthly life. The neural pathways that encode sinful habits, distorted desires, traumatic memories, false beliefs, and the roots of mental and emotional illness would be perfectly healed and reconfigured according to the pattern of Christ's own perfect humanity.

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This process can be conceived of as a form of divine neuro-editing. It is not a vague "zapping" into a state of perfection, but a meticulous, loving, and precise act of healing and perfecting the very neural structures that constitute our identity. This is not an erasure of the self or a loss of personal history. The memories of one's life, including failures and sins, would likely remain as part of the individual's story, consistent with Moltmann's view of a restored life history.[35] However, the *affective and behavioral power* of those sinful or traumatic memories would be neutralized. The neural "strongholds" of sin — the deeply entrenched pathways of addiction, pride, fear, or bitterness — would be completely dismantled and rewired for holiness.

This provides a deeply personal and compelling vision of our future hope. The promise of glorification is not merely for a new, indestructible body, but for a healed, whole, and perfected mind. It is the hope that God's redemptive work will penetrate to the deepest and most intricate level of our being — our very synapses. The neurological roots of anxiety, depression, addiction, and all forms of psychological brokenness will be finally and fully healed, allowing the true, sanctified self — the person we were becoming in Christ on earth — to flourish unhindered in perfect communion with God for eternity.

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Section 5: Implications to Earthly Sanctification Arising from This Model

The DNA-Connectome model of resurrection is not merely a speculative exercise in eschatology; it has profound and immediate implications for the Christian life in the here and now. If our personal identity, encoded in the connectome, is the very "pattern" that God preserves and glorifies, then our actions, thoughts, and choices on earth are of eternal significance. This section explores how the theological doctrine of sanctification can be understood as a process of neural reformation, where believers actively participate with the Holy Spirit in shaping the very self that will be resurrected.

The Doctrine of Sanctification

In Christian theology, **sanctification** is the progressive, lifelong process by which a believer is made holy and increasingly conformed to the image of Christ.[45] It is the practical outworking of the new life received at conversion. While justification is a one-time legal declaration by God that a sinner is righteous in His sight through faith in Christ, sanctification is the ongoing, internal transformation of a believer's character and conduct.[47]

A central Biblical text describing this process is Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will." Paul identifies the "renewing of the mind" as the core mechanism of Christian transformation.[48] This is not a passive event but an active, continuous process. It involves a deliberate turning away from the world's ways of thinking and a

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conscious effort to adopt a new, godly mindset, which in turn leads to transformed actions.[49] This renewal is not achieved by human effort alone but is the work of the Holy Spirit, who aids in the reshaping of a believer's values, priorities, and affections .[45]

Neuroplasticity and the "Renewing of the Mind"

The Biblical call to "renew the mind" finds a stunning scientific correlation to the principle of **neuroplasticity**. This refers to the brain's inherent ability to reorganize its structure, functions, and connections in response to experience.[45] For much of the 20th century, the adult brain was thought to be a static, hardwired machine. We now know that the brain is constantly changing. Every thought we think, every emotion we feel, every action we take, and every habit we form physically alters our brain. Repetitive experiences strengthen certain synaptic connections, making them more efficient, while disuse causes other connections to weaken and prune away. In essence, our life experiences are constantly "rewiring" our brains.

This provides a powerful biological lens through which to view the process of sanctification. The "renewing of the mind" is not just a metaphor; it is a description of a neuro-physical reality. When a Christian engages in spiritual disciplines, they are actively participating in the neuroplastic reshaping of their brain.

- **Meditation on Scripture:** Regularly filling one's mind with God's Word (John 17:17) establishes new, truth-based neural pathways, replacing the old, false narratives of the world.[49]
- **Prayer and Contemplation:** Focused prayer and worship can alter brain activity, strengthening circuits

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associated with empathy, compassion, and emotional regulation, while quieting those associated with fear and self-focus.[51]

- **Resisting Temptation and Practicing Righteousness:** Every time a believer chooses to turn away from a sinful impulse and instead perform an act of love, patience, or self-control, they are weakening the old neural pathways associated with the sin and strengthening new, righteous ones.

Conversely, the Bible's warnings about sin also have a neurological basis. Paul speaks of "strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5), which can be understood as deeply entrenched, maladaptive neural pathways carved by repeated sinful thoughts and behaviors.[45] These are the familiar ruts of addiction, anxiety, lust, or anger that feel "natural" because they are the brain's path of least resistance. The spiritual battle of "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" is the arduous but necessary work of forging new neural pathways through the power of the Spirit, breaking the deterministic pull of the old ones.[45]

The Eternal Significance of Earthly Life

The convergence of sanctification and neuroplasticity within the DNA-Connectome model gives immense weight and purpose to our earthly existence. If the connectome is the "information-bearing pattern" that God preserves for eternity, then the process of sanctification is nothing less than the process of shaping the eternal self. Our choices and actions in this life are not merely about accumulating rewards or avoiding punishments in the next. They are about actively co-laboring with the Holy Spirit in the formation of our eternal character, a character that is

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physically encoded in the very structure of our brains.

The struggle against sin, the pursuit of virtue, the cultivation of love, joy, peace, patience — these are not temporary exercises for just an earthly life. They are the work of reforming the informational pattern that will be the basis of our glorified identity. The more we allow the Spirit to renew our minds on earth, rewiring our desires and habits to align with Christ's, the more the pattern that is preserved will be one that reflects His glory. This imbues the daily, often difficult, work of Christian sanctification with an eternal, physical consequence. We are, quite literally, building the person we will be for eternity.

This framework provides a unified and embodied understanding of the entire arc of salvation. The traditionally distinct theological categories of justification, sanctification, and glorification can be seen as deeply integrated stages in the redemption of a person, in his/her entirety.

- **Justification** is the foundational moment when God, by grace through faith, declares us righteous in Christ. In informational terms, He "re-tags" our identity as belonging to Him, granting us a new legal and relational status.
- **Sanctification** is the lifelong, physical outworking of that new identity. It is the process where the "software" of our connectome is progressively re-written, through Spirit-guided neuroplasticity, to align with our justified status. It is the earthly project of making our character consistent with our calling.
- **Glorification** is the final, eschatological act of divine completion. God takes the sanctified connectome — the unique pattern we have co-created with Him through our

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choices — performs a final “debugging” to remove all remaining traces of sin and trauma, and uploads this perfected software on upgraded “hardware” (the glorified body based on perfected DNA).

This creates a seamless narrative of salvation that is deeply personal, physical, and coherent. It connects the once-for-all event of justification to the daily, moment-by-moment process of sanctification and the ultimate hope of glorification in a single, embodied story. It powerfully answers the question, “Why does my life now matter for eternity?” It matters because this life is the workshop in which our eternal self is being forged.

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Section 6: The Archetype and the Hope: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Any theological model of resurrection, no matter how scientifically plausible or philosophically elegant, remains purely speculative without a grounding anchor. For Christianity, that anchor is not a theory, but a person and an event: the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. This final section argues that the historical reality of Christ's resurrection serves as both the archetype for the DNA-Connectome model and the ultimate guarantee of the believer's hope for a future, glorified, embodied existence.

The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus as the Historical Bedrock

The Christian faith is unique among world religions in its dependence on a specific historical event. The entire theological edifice stands or falls on the claim that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, died, was buried, and on the third day was raised bodily from the dead.[1] Paul's logic in 1 Corinthians 15 is relentless: if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, the apostolic preaching is useless, faith is futile, believers are still in their sins, and those who have died in Christ have perished.[2] The bodily resurrection is not an optional doctrine; it is the basis and essence of the Christian religion.

While the bodily resurrection of Christ is, by definition, a unique and unrepeatable event and therefore lies outside the purview of the scientific method (which deals with repeatable phenomena), it is subject to *historical* inquiry.[5] A strong

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cumulative case can be made for its historicity. Theologians and historians like N. T. Wright and Wolfhart Pannenberg argue that the hypothesis "God raised Jesus from the dead" is the best historical explanation for the known data of the first century, including the empty tomb, the numerous post-mortem appearances of Jesus to a variety of individuals and groups, and the sudden, radical transformation of the disciples from a frightened, scattered band into bold proclaimers of the resurrection, willing to die for their conviction.[53] The claim of an empty tomb could have been easily refuted by producing the body, yet no such refutation ever occurred.[53] The very existence and explosive growth of the early Christian church is a historical phenomenon that begs for an adequate explanation, and the disciples' sincere belief that they had encountered the risen Jesus provides the most historically plausible cause.[4]

Jesus's Resurrected Body: The Model for Glorification

The nature of Jesus's resurrected body, as depicted in the Gospel accounts, provides a powerful template for understanding the nature of our own future glorified bodies. In fact, in the Bible, we are taught that the bodily resurrection of Christ is an archetype and model for the bodily resurrection of Christian believers. Paul taught: "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20-22; see also 1 Cor. 15:42-44; Phil. 3:20-21; Romans 8:11; Romans 8:22-23; 1 John 3:2). Given this, to understand our eventual bodily resurrection, it is helpful to review what we know about Christ's resurrected body.

The Biblical narratives consistently portray Christ's

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resurrected body as simultaneously physical and transformed, demonstrating both continuity and discontinuity with his pre-resurrection existence.[40]

- **Physicality and Continuity:** The Gospels leave no doubt as to the physical reality of the risen Jesus. He explicitly invites the disciples to handle him, stating, "a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Luke 24:39).[40] He eats fish in their presence to demonstrate his corporeality (Luke 24:41-43). He shows Thomas the wounds in his hands and side, proving he is the same person who was crucified (John 20:27). Mary Magdalene clings to his feet (Matthew 28:9).[40] These accounts are not of a ghostly apparition or a subjective vision; they describe encounters with a tangible, physical being. This affirms that the Christian hope is for a real, bodily existence, not a disembodied one
- **Transformation and Discontinuity:** At the same time, Jesus's resurrected body is clearly not just a resuscitated corpse like that of Lazarus, who would one day die again.[6] It is a body transformed into a new, glorified mode of being. He can appear suddenly in a locked room, seemingly unconstrained by normal physical barriers (John 20:19, 26).[6] He can vanish from sight in an instant (Luke 24:31). He is not always immediately recognizable to his closest followers, suggesting a changed appearance (Luke 24:16; John 20:14). This demonstrates a new kind of physicality, one that is no longer subject to the limitations of our current world. It is precisely the "spiritual body" (*soma pneumatikon*) that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15:44ff — a physical body now perfectly submitted to and empowered by the Spirit of God.

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This dual nature of Christ's resurrected body — physical yet transformed, continuous yet discontinuous — is exactly what the DNA-Connectome model would predict for our own resurrection. It will be *our* body, re-created from our unique DNA blueprint, ensuring continuity. It will be *our* self, re-instantiated from our unique connectome, ensuring the continuity of personal identity. Yet, both will be perfected and glorified, operating according to the new realities of the new creation, free from decay, disease, sin, and physical limitation.

Christ as the "Firstfruits"

The ultimate ground of Christian hope lies in the Biblical understanding of Jesus as the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). In ancient agriculture, the firstfruits were the first part of the harvest offered to God, serving as both a sample of and a guarantee for the full harvest that was to follow. Paul's use of this metaphor is precise and powerful. Jesus's resurrection is not an isolated, anomalous miracle for himself alone. It is the inaugural event of the new creation, the beginning of God's final harvest of humanity.[2] He is the prototype, the pioneer of a new humanity.

Therefore, the believer's hope for resurrection is not an abstract wish or a philosophical speculation. It is grounded in the pattern established by God in Christ. What God did for Jesus, He has promised to do for all those who are in Christ, by faith. The model we have developed posits a possible framework for how God *might* accomplish this, based on our understandings of biology and neuroscience. However, the certainty of the promise of a bodily resurrection does not rest on the development of a possibly-elegant model for the process of resurrection, but on the historical reality of the empty tomb and the risen Christ. He is the

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living proof that death is not the end and that those in Christ will experience a new, glorified and embodied life after death on earth. Our future bodily resurrection, no matter what its mechanism may be, is a participation in Christ's resurrection.

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Conclusion: An Integrated Vision of Eternal Life

The Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection, while central to the faith, often stands as a formidable intellectual challenge in an era shaped by scientific materialism. The DNA-Connectome model proposed in this study offers a pathway toward reconciling this ancient hope with contemporary knowledge, presenting an integrated vision of eternal life that is both theologically robust and scientifically conversant. By grounding human identity in the twin information systems of our genetic code and our neural architecture, this framework provides a coherent and plausible mechanism for the preservation and glorification of the whole person.

This model successfully synthesizes key insights from diverse fields. From Biblical anthropology, as articulated by scholars like Oscar Cullmann and N. T. Wright, it retrieves the authentically Biblical understanding of the human person as a mind/body unity, shifting the focus from the Greek concept of an disembodied soul to the Biblical hope of a resurrected body. From contemporary neuroscience, it embraces the evidence that links mind, memory, and consciousness to the physical structure of the brain, identifying the unique connectome as, effectively, the repository of the self. From the philosophical theology of thinkers like John Polkinghorne and Nancey Murphy, it adopts a nonreductive physicalist framework, defining the soul, not as a separate substance, but as emergent from the "information-bearing pattern" in the brain.

The synthesis of these streams of thought yields a model of resurrection as a divine act of re-creation and re-instantiation. God, the author and sustainer of all information, preserves the

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essential patterns of our being — our DNA and our connectome — and re-embodies them in a new, glorified form. This framework provides tangible meaning to the theological concept of glorification, envisioning it as a divine perfection of our genetic blueprint and a divine healing — a form of "neuro-editing" — of our neural pattern, removing the corruptions of sin and trauma. Furthermore, it imbues our earthly life with profound eternal significance. The process of sanctification, understood through the lens of neuroplasticity, becomes the Spirit-led reformation of the very neural self that will be preserved for eternity. Our daily choices are, in a literal sense, forging the character of our resurrected identity.

Ultimately, this entire speculative structure is anchored in the historical reality of Jesus Christ's resurrection. His glorified body, both physical and transformed, serves as the archetype and the guarantee for the same process occurring to us. He is the "firstfruits," the pioneer of the new creation, and our hope is a participation in the victory He has already won.

Having said all this, it is crucial to maintain a posture of intellectual humility. This study does not claim to have definitively "solved" the mystery of the resurrection or to present some sort of new theological dogma. It is a model, a conceptual tool designed to demonstrate plausibility and coherence. Our scientific understanding of consciousness remains in its infancy, and the precise mechanisms of divine action are, and will likely always remain, beyond our full comprehension. The gaps in our knowledge are vast.

Nevertheless, the DNA-Connectome model successfully addresses the initial challenge set forth in the introduction. It provides an intellectually serious and spiritually encouraging framework for believers living in a scientific age. It demonstrates

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that one need not sacrifice scientific integrity to hold fast to the Biblical promise of resurrection, nor must one abandon faith to accept the findings of modern biology and neuroscience. Instead, it reveals a potential harmony, a deep resonance between the patterns discovered in creation and the promises of the Creator. The final ground for this hope, however, rests not in the elegance of this or any other human model, but in the everlasting faithfulness of the God who, in the second person of the Trinity Jesus Christ, entered into death and emerged into a new, embodied, and glorious life, paving the way for all who would follow.[14]

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